

The Address—Mr. Wagner

that during the last session of the twenty-ninth parliament an invitation was given to the federal government by the minister of housing of Ontario to participate in housing programs then being considered, and now being implemented, by the provincial government, so that provincial and federal schemes, which in many cases were parallel, could be integrated? There has been no positive response yet from the federal government. That is my first question.

Secondly, would the hon. member not agree with me that one of the difficulties that municipalities face in terms of the impost charges about which the hon. member spoke so eloquently is the presently existing inequitable positions of revenue sharing between the provinces and the federal government? Can the hon. member tell me whether or not the federal government is proposing any new initiatives to right the inequities in the revenue sharing positions?

Mr. Cafik: Firstly in connection with the second point, the impost costs and the inequitable sharing of the tax burden, I draw to the hon. member's attention that so far as I am concerned the inequity rests primarily at the provincial level. The province of Ontario has criteria that demand a certain balancing of industrial assessment, residential assessment and so on, which falls very hard on bedroom communities. They should resolve that question firstly with the municipalities.

The first question had to do with consultation at the federal and provincial levels. Obviously, my answer has already been given in my speech; I think we need a lot of consultation about the whole broad question of housing. The hon. member talked about co-operating with some existing provincial housing schemes, but it seems to me they ought to put their own house in order in that respect and open up more land, as well as get rid of the bureaucratic red tape which is causing the problem in the first place.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Hardly an answer to my question.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I do now leave the chair until two o'clock.

At one o'clock the House took recess.

[Translation]

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

Mr. Claude Wagner (Saint-Hyacinthe): Madam Speaker, I was eager to intervene in this debate. I know that the House understands my well-founded eagerness since it goes back to July 8 last.

Before sending special greetings to my fellow-citizens of Saint-Hyacinthe and replying directly to some comments made by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) in this House, I would first like to congratulate you, Madam Speaker, on your appointment and assure you, as do my colleagues in the House, of my co-operation in the carrying out of your new duties.

[Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton).]

I also congratulate the Speaker of the House and would like to tell him that he will not have an easy task during this Parliament. It is not an easy challenge to take up, mainly because the people outside of this House are restless and demand solutions to their more and more agonizing problems. There will be clashes in the House too. The opposition will have to stand firmly on its guard. It will have to show its sincerity in supporting fair measures, but it will prove responsible in fighting ruthlessly in case the government remains as inert as during the first ninety days following the election.

Madam Speaker, I hope the Speaker of the House will set to work with objectivity and fairness. I hope the day will come when we will have an independent speaker free of any political allegiance.

Madam Speaker, I mentioned a while ago how eager I was to participate in this debate and you guessed, from my broad smile, that my eagerness stemmed first of all from the results obtained in that marvelous riding of Saint-Hyacinthe in the last election. That the population should renew the mandate of its representative by suddenly metamorphosing his previous majority of 698 into 5,478 is no every day occurrence.

Those people therefore deserve that I express to them today my gratitude and appreciation, and that I assure them that I shall live up to my promises.

Those commitments, more specifically those dealing with agriculture, the golden age and the industrial development in my riding, will be respected to the letter; during this Parliament I shall intervene when need be, as often as necessary, so that the people I represent are kept informed of the work accomplished and get satisfaction.

In agriculture, especially, the government will have to launch a "green operation"; as the saying goes, the time has come to give it all we've got. When one considers the proliferation of auction sales in Quebec especially, one soon realized why the farmers are growing angrier.

Recently, 2,000 of them, in front of the Quebec Parliament, exposed their grievances. Madam Speaker, let us not wait till those people, who rightly hope the governments will solve their problems, grow so impatient that they go beyond the bounds of reasons and are led perhaps into even more difficult situations.

Answers are available to agriculture's problems. I am not among those simply decrying the government on acting negatively in this House. The eastern region should first be guaranteed feed grain supplies at a fair price. Production costs should be controlled, prices and markets stabilized. As requested by industrial milk producers, their legitimate demands should be considered and met with.

Above all, Madam Speaker, the problem of seasonal labour should be eased, the change to younger generations made easier, and producers and their families ensured of a fair return, a reasonable profit and more fitting standards of living. This in itself would be quite an achievement!

We know what the aged request, and I expect the payment, starting from October 1975, of benefits to the beneficiary's spouse between 60 and 65 years of age is but a first step toward gradual and voluntary lowering of pensionable age to 60.